The Piano Lesson by August Wilson **Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Background Information (Historical/Social Context) Period 1A 2A 1B 3B**

***Instructions*: Please visit the following websites and answer the questions using the information found on the website. Answer questions completely and be prepared to discuss in class. NOTE: ALL of the websites are available from our class website. Go to “What Did We Do in Class Today?” and click on the link. From there, all of the sites are on one page! (no typing ☺)**

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| **Topic/Question(s):** | **Response:** |
| **1. *August Wilson*: (A) List three facts discovered about Wilson’s life. (B) What is “The Pittsburgh Cycle”? (C) List two (2) themes often found in Wilson’s works (consider themes that interest YOU).**  [**www.augustwilson.net**](http://www.augustwilson.net)  **(click on plays & bio, then Slide Show)** | **A. --**  **--**  **--**  **B.**  **C.** |
| **2. *Romare Bearden* (esp. his artwork titled *The Piano Lesson*): (A) Give a brief summary of his life as an artist. (B) What is the significance of his work titled *The Piano Lesson?***  **\*use the same website as above** | **A.**  **B.** |
| **3. *Stagger Lee:* (A) Briefly summarize the background story for this song (1895). (B) Identify four different artists who have recorded this song. Provide year of recording. (C) What does this song express?**  [**http://www.staggerlee.com/**](http://www.staggerlee.com/) | **A.**  **B.**  **C.** |
| **Topic/Question(s):** | **Response:** |
| **4. *The Great Migration (African-Americans in the 20th Century)*: (A) Why did African-Americans migrate from the south to northern and Midwestern cities? Give three reasons. (B) List three (3) areas A-A originally settled during the first. (C) Where did A-A settle during the second migration? (D) What was the significance of the Black Press?**  [**http://afroamhistory.about.com/od/segregation/p/Causes-Of-The-Great-Migration-Searching-For-The-Promised-Land.htm**](http://afroamhistory.about.com/od/segregation/p/Causes-Of-The-Great-Migration-Searching-For-The-Promised-Land.htm) | **A. –**  **--**  **--**  **B.**  **C.**  **D.** |
| **5. *America in the 1930s:* (A) How was the 1930s characterized in American society? (B) What was happening with unemployment at this time? (C) What happened to farmers/laborers at this time? (D) What was Hoover’s response to the economic depression plaguing American society? (E) What was Roosevelt’s New Deal Plan? Why did he owe his election success in part to the A-A community?**  [**https://americanstage.org/pdfs/The-Piano-Lesson-Study-Guide.pdf**](https://americanstage.org/pdfs/The-Piano-Lesson-Study-Guide.pdf)  **- PAGES 18-19** | **A.**  **B.**  **C.**  **D.**  **E.** |
| **6. *African-American Life during the Great Depression (1930s):* (A) Where did A-A find their cultural identity in the 1930s? (B) What irony existed in regards to music? (C) Summarize what was happening in the south in the 1930s.**  [**https://americanstage.org/pdfs/The-Piano-Lesson-Study-Guide.pdf**](https://americanstage.org/pdfs/The-Piano-Lesson-Study-Guide.pdf)  **- PAGES 19-20** | **A.**  **B.**  **C.** |
| **7. *Pittsburgh, PA’s “Hill District”, 1930s-1940s:* (A) What is the Hill District? (B) What did poet Claude McKay once call the district? (C) Identify three (3) impacts of the Hill District in the 1930s. (HINT: 2nd, 3rd, 4th paragraphs on 24-25).**  **\***[**https://americanstage.org/pdfs/The-Piano-Lesson-Study-Guide.pdf**](https://americanstage.org/pdfs/The-Piano-Lesson-Study-Guide.pdf)  **– PAGES 24-25** | **A.**  **B.**  **C. –**  **--**  **--** |
| **8. *The GRIOT*: (A) Define the term “griot.” (B) Discuss how their function in society has evolved (past to present).**  [**http://news.psu.edu/story/140694/2002/05/01/research/keepers-history**](http://news.psu.edu/story/140694/2002/05/01/research/keepers-history) | **A.**  **B. Past:**  **Present:** |
| ***9. Parchman Farm*: (A) Where is Parchman Farm? (B) Why did folklorists come to Parchman Farm in the 1930s? (C) How did the farm operate for several decades? (D) What did Alan & John Lomax, Herbert Halpert, & William Ferris discover in the 1930s?**  [**www.msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/parchman-farm**](http://www.msbluestrail.org/blues-trail-markers/parchman-farm) | **A.**  **B.**  **C.**  **D.** |
| ***10. Chain Gang Songs*: (A) Why did prisoners sing songs as they worked? (B) Why were they called “chain gang” songs?**  [**http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/2002/Music/Pages/worksongs.htm**](http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/2002/Music/Pages/worksongs.htm) | **A.**  **B.** |
| ***11. African-American work songs and field hollers*: (A) Discuss the significance of the work song in the life of the African-American sharecropper. (B) What is the field holler? Who led the workers in song & what was a typical theme?**  [**http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/2002/Music/Pages/worksongs.htm**](http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/2002/Music/Pages/worksongs.htm) | **A.**  **B.** |
| ***12. The Yazoo Delta Railroad (The Yellow Dog)*: (A) Identify years of operation. (B) Why is it called the “Yellow Dog”? (C) What is the railroad’s significance in terms of blues music?**  **NOTE: On our website, the first link will pop up when you click the picture. The other two links are below the picture.**  [**http://www.earlyblues.com/Yellow%20Dog.htm**](http://www.earlyblues.com/Yellow%20Dog.htm)  <http://www.mississippideltarailroad.com/about.html>  [**http://www.mrjumbo.com/contents/delta99/3delta/moorhead.html**](http://www.mrjumbo.com/contents/delta99/3delta/moorhead.html) | **A.**  **B.**  **C.** |
| ***13. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (incl. A. Phillip Randolph)*: (A) Who were the Pullman Porters? (B) Who was A. Phillip Randolph? (C) What was extraordinary about this group?**  **Click ‘CONTINUE’ to learn a lesser-known fact about Randolph. (D) What is it?**  [**www.aphiliprandolphmuseum.com/evo\_history4.html**](http://www.aphiliprandolphmuseum.com/evo_history4.html) | **A.**  **B.**  **C.**  **D.** |
| ***14. W.C. Handy*: (A) For what is W.C. Handy most well-known? (B) List three (3) facts about his life YOU find of great interest.**  [**http://www.biography.com/people/wc-handy-39700**](http://www.biography.com/people/wc-handy-39700) | **A.**  **B. --**  **--**  **--** |
| **15. 1930s Slang (“Harlemese”): (A) List three (3) individuals who compiled/published slang glossaries in the 1930s. (B) Look through the glossary and write down seven (7) slang terms from the time period and what they mean. Choose one from each of the 2 page entries.**  [**http://www.theharlemrenaissance.org/harlem\_renaissance\_slang.html**](http://www.theharlemrenaissance.org/harlem_renaissance_slang.html) | **A.**  **B.**  **- -**  **- -**  **- -**  **-** |